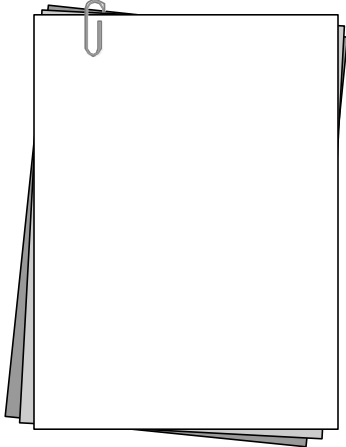


GRANT AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COORDINATION



LONG-TERM GOALS

Goal 1 - To achieve maximum water quality benefits from available grant funds

Goal 2 - To ensure that technical assistance and support is needed to achieve maximum water quality benefits is established

Goal 3 - Develop new public-private partnerships to enhance funding for ongoing nonpoint source program initiatives and implementation activities

INTRODUCTION

With the update of Virginia's Nonpoint Source (NPS) Pollution Management Program comes new opportunities and new challenges. One of the key challenges Virginia faces is efficient and cost-effective use of limited resources. To meet this challenge, Virginia will need to carefully coordinate program funding and target limited grant dollars. As well, Virginia will need to ensure that land owners, local governments and project sponsors receive adequate technical assistance.

As a result of funding provided by Congress for the President's Clean Water Action Plan and enactment and approval of the Virginia Water Quality Improvement Act by the governor and Virginia General Assembly, funding for Virginia's NPS Management Program has increased substantially in recent years. Nevertheless, the costs of controlling NPS pollution far exceed available funding, so efficient and effective use of available funding as critical as ever.

NPS Pollution Issues Related to Resource Coordination

Although limited resources and inadequate coordination do not cause NPS pollution, they can result in lost opportunities for correcting existing problems. Effective program coordination can help ensure efficient use of limited resources. In addition, it can help target resources to where they have the greatest impact.

Effective coordination requires identification of the full range of incentive and technical assistance programs and a determination of opportunities to improve program coordination or better leverage program funding for conservation activities.

AGENCY ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The Commonwealth of Virginia administers numerous technical assistance and financial incentive programs that support conservation activities. Similarly, a number of federal programs provide financial and technical assistance and many non-governmental organizations provide grants for conservation activities. Examples of state and federal incentive programs include:

- Virginia Agricultural BMP Cost Share Program
- Water Quality Improvement Fund
- Virginia BMP Tax Credit Program
- Wetland Reserve Program
- Section 319 Grant Program
- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program
- Reforestation of Timberlands Program

Department of Conservation and Recreation

Section 319 of the Clean Water Act requires that states develop and implement NPS Management Programs. In addition, this statute authorizes funding for program development and implementation. Section 10.1 of the *Code of Virginia* establishes DCR as the lead state agency for the NPS Management Program. As such, DCR administers the Section 319 grant program. DCR is also the lead agency for the Chesapeake Bay

Implementation Grant, which Virginia receives through Section 117 of the Clean Water Act.

In addition, DCR administers the Water Quality Improvement Fund established by the General Assembly through enactment of the Water Quality Improvement Act. Other grant funds administered by DCR include Coastal NPS Pollution Control Management Program funding received from the DEQ Coastal Program, and funding for soil and water conservation districts provided by the Virginia General Assembly to facilitate district programs and Tributary Strategy development and implementation.

DCR provides technical assistance for a variety of NPS programs and activities. DCR technical assistance efforts include: SWCD support, erosion and sediment control technical training and support, stormwater management training and support, nutrient management plan writing, shoreline erosion advisory service, water quality improvement cooperative programs and technical training, and project development support.

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is a cooperative effort between the Commonwealth of Virginia and the United States Department of Agriculture to enhance the water quality and the fisheries and wildlife habitat within targeted watersheds of Virginia. Program practices and funds are available through two distinct areas of the commonwealth. The overall goal of the program is to implement water quality improvement practices on 35,000 acres within Virginia.

The Chesapeake Bay CREP covers all the watersheds within the bay drainage basin. Targeted sediment and nutrient reduction goals of the program are 33,188 tons/year of sediment, 516,873 pounds/year of nitrogen and 66,953 pounds/year of phosphorus. To accomplish these goals, the bay CREP has targeted 22,000 acres of riparian buffers and filter strips, 3,000 acres of wetland restoration and 6,000 acres of perpetual easements.

The Southern Rivers CREP covers targeted watersheds outside the bay drainage basin. Targeted sediment and nutrient reduction goals of the program are 19,481 tons/year of sediment, 131,262 pounds/year of nitrogen and 31,648 pounds/year of phosphorus. To accomplish these goals, the bay CREP has targeted 8,500 acres of

riparian buffers and filter strips, 1,500 acres of wetland restoration and 2,000 acres of perpetual easements.

Department of Environmental Quality

As the lead water quality agency for the commonwealth, DEQ administers several grant programs. Specifically DEQ receives funding under Sections 106 (base and ground water) and 604(b) of the Clean Water Act of 1987. These grant programs support a wide range of activities including ground water assessment planning studies, ground water protection activities and TMDL planning studies.

In addition, DEQ administers the Virginia Coastal Program. The Coastal Program receives grants through Sections 306, 309, 310, and 6217 of the Coastal Zone Act. As a core program element, NPS pollution control receives considerable funding through these grants.

The 1999 General Assembly passed legislation allowing DEQ to provide loans to address NPS pollution from agricultural activities under the Virginia Revolving Loan Fund. Therefore, agricultural BMPs will be eligible for funding. DEQ will prioritize applications for loan assistance on a statewide basis. Applications for practices that are expected to provide the greatest water quality benefit will be given the highest funding priority. Applications considered to impact segments on the 303(d) Impaired Waters List will receive high priority. Those impacting waters on the 305(b) Threatened List, DCR high priority waters, or the Nutrient Enriched Waters List will receive a medium priority rating. All other applicants will be given lower priority.

Technical assistance is also provided by DEQ. Areas of support include pollution prevention and citizen monitoring.

The Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Department

The Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Department (CBLAD) receives funding from the General Assembly to support grant funding for local government program development and implementation. These grant funds provide considerable support for local NPS pollution

control efforts.

In addition to funding support, CBLAD provides NPS technical assistance to local governments in the form of program development support, technical training, plan and ordinance review, and planning and design technical information and guidance. CBLAD also supports plan review for agricultural lands.

The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations

Although numerous small challenge grants are available for NPS pollution control efforts, one of the more significant potential sources of funding is the Virginia Environmental Endowment (VEE). VEE was formed as a result of a settlement related to the release of kepone into the James River. VEE provides funding for a wide range of environmental initiatives, including NPS pollution control efforts.

Several organizations provide technical assistance to landowners, businesses and local governments. Examples include Chesapeake Bay Foundation training and public awareness efforts, and Izaak Walton League of America Save Our Streams and Sierra Club citizen monitoring support.

ISSUE IDENTIFICATION & PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

Through a work group process involving grant program managers from state and federal agencies, local government and business interests and project sponsors, a number of issues and problems related to grant coordination was identified. Grant coordination and technical assistance problems and issues are listed below.

Grant Coordination

- The need for appropriate technical, topical and programmatic expertise in grant project review was identified as a problem because projects

often involve highly technical issues or specific topics that require specialized knowledge and expertise. Problems with reviewing competitive grant projects arise when reviewers lack necessary knowledge or expertise and there is no mechanism to ensure that this expertise is considered in grant project review.

- Lack of information, a consistent calendar and schedule for grant RFPs and inadequate grant coordination causes confusion for project sponsors, hinders project planning and creates administrative problems for agency staff.
- No formal process exists for oversight of proposals submitted to multiple grant programs for funding. Similarly, no mechanism exists to route projects to the most appropriate funding source. Limited project oversight can result in the potential for double funding and the need for reprogramming projects that receive multiple awards. As well, it can result in the failure to fund worthwhile projects.
- Another project coordination issue identified by the work group was the need for a better process to leverage funding between different grant programs. This issue arises because some grant programs are intended for program and project planning and other grant programs are intended for program and project implementation. Close grant program coordination can help ensure proper targeting of limited funding.
- Another resource coordination issue identified by the work group is lack of long-term plans for watershed projects. In other words, projects often lack the planning needed to effectively address long-term water quality issues within watersheds. As a result, actions funded through grant programs may not target the priority activities needed to address water quality problems.

Technical Assistance

With a largely voluntary cooperative approach to NPS pollution control, strong technical assistance is vital to the success of water quality management efforts. Although insufficient technical assistance was not identified as a problem by the Grant and Technical Assistance Coordination work group members during program development, concerns regarding limited staff resources were identified as a potential problem. The work group also identified the lack of awareness of available technical assistance.

One key area that was identified as needing improved coordination and greater emphasis is technical training and support for soil and water conservation district employees. As well, training opportunities for district directors was identified as a critical need.

OBJECTIVES (SHORT-TERM GOALS)

Objective 1. By the FY2001 grant cycle, DCR, DEQ, CBLAD, and other cooperating state and federal agencies will establish a structure and process to ensure that grant projects are reviewed consistent with appropriate technical and programmatic expertise

Objective 2. By the FY 2001 grant cycle, cooperating state and federal agencies will establish consistent grant schedules and ensure that project sponsors are aware of funding opportunities

Objective 3. By the FY 2001 grant cycle, cooperating state and federal agencies will develop a formal process to enhance project coordination between different grant programs, and to help target projects through the most appropriate funding source

Objective 4. By the FY 2002 grant cycle, cooperating agencies will work to ensure that watershed project proposals are well connected to other watershed activities and that a plan of action exists

Objective 5. By 2004, cooperating state and federal agencies will assess existing technical assistance programs to ensure they have adequate staffing

to meet program demands

Objective 6. By 2005, cooperating state and federal agencies will complete steps to increase awareness and visibility of technical assistance programs

Objective 7. By 2002, the Department of Conservation and Recreation will expand the efforts of the community development program to secure funding from philanthropic and corporate foundations to support nonpoint source pollution control activities

TABLES OF OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

Goal 1 - To achieve maximum water quality benefits from available grant funds

OBJECTIVE 1				
<i>By the FY2001 grant cycle, DCR, DEQ, CBLAD, and other cooperating state and federal agencies will establish a structure and process to ensure that grant projects are reviewed consistent with appropriate technical and programmatic expertise</i>				
STRATEGIES	RELATED TASKS	AGENCIES & OTHERS	TARGET YEAR	FUNDING SOURCE
1.1 Establish an interagency subcommittee of NPSAC comprised of grant program managers	DCR will request that NPSAC member agencies identify appropriate agency representatives	•NPSAC agencies	2000	•N/A
1.2 Develop specific guidance regarding technical criteria for grant project review	Consider creation of an interagency grant MOU	•NPSAC Sub-committee	2001	•N/A

OBJECTIVE 2				
<i>By the FY 2001 grant cycle, cooperating state and federal agencies will establish consistent grant schedules and ensure that project sponsors are aware of funding opportunities</i>				
STRATEGIES	RELATED TASKS	AGENCIES & OTHERS	TARGET YEAR	FUNDING SOURCE
2.1 NPSAC member agencies will develop a calendar of grant funding availability	NPSAC member agencies will include grant award announcements and RFP notifications on agency web sites	•NPSAC agencies	2000	•N/A

	NPSAC member agencies will publish information on grants	•NPSAC agencies	2001	•General Fund
	Announce funding availability and calendar at public meetings	•NPSAC agencies	Ongoing	•N/A

OBJECTIVE 3				
<i>By the FY 2001 grant cycle, cooperating state and federal agencies will develop a formal process to enhance project coordination between different grant programs, and to help target projects through the most appropriate funding source</i>				
STRATEGIES	RELATED TASKS	AGENCIES & OTHERS	TARGET YEAR	FUNDING SOURCE
3.1 Form a grant review subcommittee of NPSAC that would meet quarterly or as needed to coordinate ongoing grant programs.	Identify project proposals that may be well suited for other grant programs	•NPSAC agencies	2000-2001	•N/A

OBJECTIVE 4				
<i>By the FY 2002 grant cycle, cooperating agencies will work to ensure that watershed project proposals are well connected to other watershed activities and that a plan of action exists</i>				
STRATEGIES	RELATED TASKS	AGENCIES & OTHERS	TARGET YEAR	FUNDING SOURCE
4.1 Focus more attention on project development through technical assistance and out-reach efforts and development and dissemination of grant program informational material	Revise RFP language and scope of work requirements to ensure that projects include or reference a watershed plan of action	•DCR •DEQ •CBLAD and other •NPSAC agencies •Watershed Conservation Roundtables	2001	•General Fund •Various grant funds (esp. grants with flexibility to support project planning activities)
	Review strategies, actions developed by Watershed Conservation Roundtable and tributary plans and other watershed efforts to determine applicability to relevant grant programs			

4.2 Coordinate grant project development with Watershed Conservation Roundtables and other watershed efforts			2002	•General Fund
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Goal 2 - By 2005, ensure that technical assistance and support needed to achieve maximum water quality benefits is established

OBJECTIVE 5				
<i>By 2004, cooperating state and federal agencies will assess existing technical assistance programs to ensure that they have adequate staffing and resources to meet program demands</i>				
STRATEGIES	RELATED TASKS	AGENCIES & OTHERS	TARGET YEAR	FUNDING SOURCE
5.1 NPSAC and Watershed Conservation Roundtables will conduct an assessment of technical assistance needs and agency capabilities	Submit collaborative legislative request if additional staffing needs are determined to be required to meet technical assistance demand	•NRC •DCR •DEQ and other •NPSAC agencies •Watershed Conservation Roundtables	2003	•General Fund •319 grant •Agency resources
	Survey needs of localities, business, organizations			
5.2 Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District Association will conduct an assessment of technical assistance needs and district capabilities	Establish training programs for SWCD staff and directors	•DCR and other •NPSAC agencies	2004	•General Fund

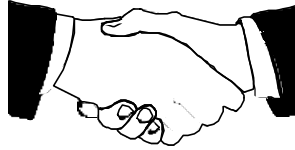
OBJECTIVE 6				
<i>By 2005, cooperating state and federal agencies will complete steps to increase awareness and visibility of technical assistance programs</i>				
STRATEGIES	RELATED TASKS	AGENCIES & OTHERS	TARGET YEAR	FUNDING SOURCE

6.1 NPSAC agencies will produce a technical assistance guide that describes technical assistance availability	Agencies will post technical assistance availability on web sites	•NPSAC agencies	2003	•319 grant
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Goal 3 - Develop new public-private partnerships to enhance funding for ongoing nonpoint source program initiatives and implementation activities

OBJECTIVE 7				
<i>By 2002, the Department of Conservation and Recreation will expand the efforts of the community development program to secure funding from philanthropic and corporate foundations to support nonpoint source pollution control activities</i>				
STRATEGIES	RELATED TASKS	AGENCIES & OTHERS	TARGET YEAR	FUNDING SOURCE
7.1 Identify philanthropic and corporate foundation sources and explore funding opportunities	Survey other states to help identify successful community development initiatives	•DCR	2001	•NA
	Expand current cooperative efforts between DCR and private organizations			

WORK GROUP MEMBERS & AGENCY/ORGANIZATION REPRESENTED



Grant & Technical Assistance Coordination

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